



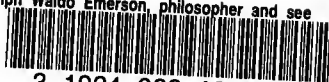
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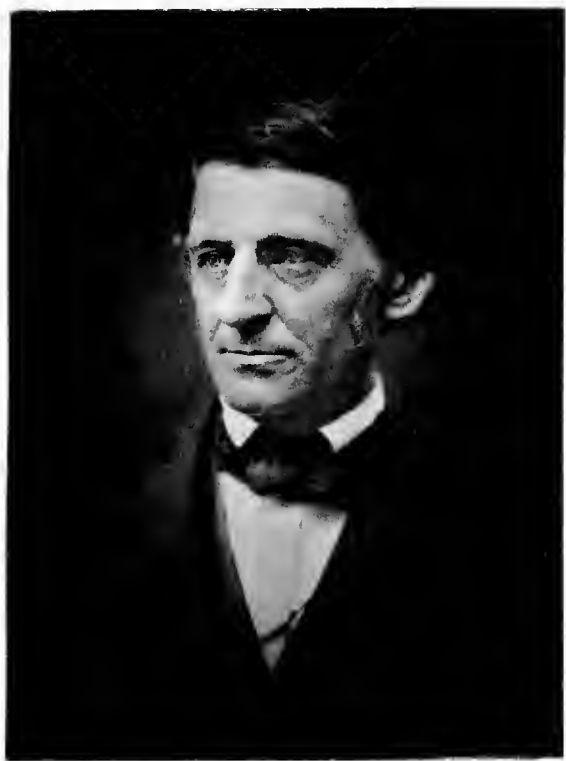














# RALPH WALDO EMERSON

*Philosopher and Seer*

*AN ESTIMATE OF*

HIS CHARACTER AND GENIUS

*In Prose and Verse*

BY

A. BRONSON ALCOTT

“

*ILLUSTRATED*

LONDON

ELLIOT STOCK, 62 PATERNOSTER ROW, E. C

1889



Ὡς περ γὰρ οἱ τὰ πεινῶντα θρέμματα θαλλὸν ἢ τινα  
καρπὸν προσέλοντες ἄγουσι, οὐδέ μοι λόγους οὕτω προ-  
τείνων ἐν βιβλίοις τήν τε Ἀττικὴν φαίνει περιάξειν  
ἅπασαν καὶ ὅποι ἂν ἄλλοσε βούλῃ.

PLATO, *Phædr.* p. 230 D.

“For as men lead hungry creatures by holding out  
a green bough or an apple, so you, it would seem,  
might lead me about all Attica and wherever else  
you please, by holding toward me discourses out of  
your books.”

PLATO.



RALPH WALDO EMERSON

TO

MARY E. STEARNS.

---

CONCORD, July 5, 1865.

MY DEAR MRS. STEARNS.

The gift of the birthday was truly a "surprise." There lay a more beautiful book than Aldus or Elzevir ever made, slipped into the house as carelessly as a roseleaf or a dandelion-down blown in at the window. Mr. Alcott's note indicated a "friend," without naming him or her. And when I came to read the text, that, too, was such a Persian superlative on the poor merits of the subject, that I had to shade my eyes as if to accept only a part of the meaning. I may shake your belief in my good sense, if I say I don't know but I suffered more than I enjoyed; but I soon came to admire the lyrical tone of all this remarkable writing, inspired by the most generous sentiment, fortified, too, by the wish to convey the good-will of other friends who made him their spokesman. So I made a covenant with myself to join these friends in ignoring the infirm actuality, stoutly holding up the ideal outline of

the poor man we were talking of. And now I have learned to look at the book with courage, and at least to thank the friends who jointly completed it, very heartily, for this rare and exquisite work of kindness. I have been twice tempted to send you some verses on this occasion, as they would be really more fit carriers of what I have to say ; and perhaps I yet shall, though the rhyming fit seldom comes to me.

Ever gratefully,

Your deeply obliged,

R. W. EMERSON.

MRS. MARY E. STEARNS.



## PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

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The publishers have here presented a book about Emerson, written by the one man who stood nearest to him of all men ; one from whom he drew inspiration in generous measure, and to whom, in return, he discovered without reserve his inmost self. Such a book cannot fail to be an original and vital contribution to EMERSONIANA. Not to read it, is to miss a clear and searching exegesis of one whose name has been called the greatest in American literature. It is like a portrait of one of the old masters, painted by his own brush.

The introductory sonnet to Emerson is pitched in a lofty key, and condenses into fourteen pithy lines a statement of the author's life-long debt of friendship — material and spiritual. The essay itself was written twenty-odd years ago, while Mr. Alcott was still in the full vigor of his intellect. It was privately printed, and presented to Emerson on his birthday. A limited edition was published for the first time in 1882, and readily sold. The revision and reading of the proof-sheets of this edition was the last literary

work which Mr. Alcott did, previous to the stroke of paralysis which deprived him of the perfect control of his faculties, and kept him a prisoner in his room ever afterward. It was a work occupying several months, as the octogenarian's visits to Boston were somewhat infrequent, and often including other business. Such moments as he could give were, of course, valuable ; and the publishers, at whose suggestion the work was undertaken, would meet him, now in the topmost story of some lofty building, and now in some dim-lighted basement, where together they would go over the unfinished sheets, — time gliding by for the nonce, all unheeded.

So anxious was Mr. Alcott that his work on Emerson should some day be given to the world, that after his paralytic shock, when his memory had lost its grasp of many things, and among others, of his recent labors on his newly published book, — a copy of which he had not seen, — he still remembered his former earnest wish that it should be made public. And to one of his friends, who spent several hours with him each week, he remarked with much excitement, on two or three occasions, that his essay must be brought out at once ; insisting that it should be published in the philosophical magazine which his friend edited. Finally a copy of the book was brought to him, greatly to his astonishment and delight. This is all the more touching an incident of his friendship for the great

Emerson, when it is remembered that the latter more than once said that "it would be a pity if Alcott survived him, since he alone possessed the means of showing to the world what Alcott really was." — (Cabot's Memoir of Emerson, vol. i. p. 281.)

The book also contains Alcott's "Ion : a Monody," — read by him at the Concord School of Philosophy, and to which Mr. John Albee, in "The New-York Tribune," paid the following high praise : "It continues for us that tender strain bequeathed by Moschus's 'Lament for Bion,' Milton's 'Lycidas,' and Shelley's 'Adonais ;' but it has a pathos and beauty all its own, . . . faultless in tone and in art."

Mr. Sanborn's ode to Emerson, "The Poet's Countersign," also read at the Concord School, completes the volume, and makes a worthy addition to that lofty form of verse that has enriched the literatures of all ages, from Pindar to Tennyson.



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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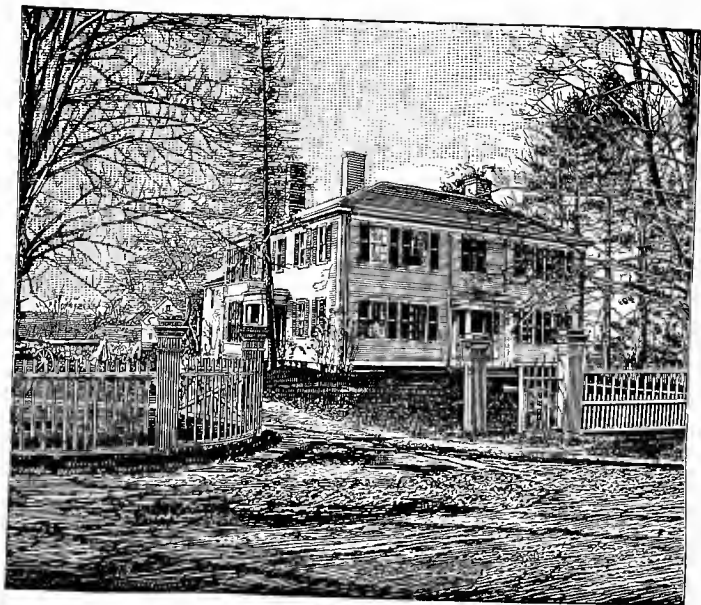
Misfortune to have lived not knowing thee !  
'T were not high living, nor to noblest end,  
Who, dwelling near, learned not sincerity,  
Rich friendship's ornament that still doth lend  
To life its consequence and propriety.  
Thy fellowship was my culture, noble friend !  
By the hand thou took'st me, and did'st condescend  
To bring me straightway into thy fair guild ;  
And life-long hath it been high compliment  
By that to have been known, and thy friend styled,  
Given to rare thought and to good learning bent ;  
Whilst in my straits an angel on me smiled.  
Permit me then, thus honored, still to be  
A scholar in thy university.











EMERSON'S HOUSE.



surprise and delight. And all good epic poets were thought to compose, not by choice, but by inspiration ; and so, too, the good lyric poets drew, they tell us, "from fountains flowing with nectar, and gathered flowers from the gardens and glades of the Muses; they, like bees, being ever on the wing. For the poet was a thing light-winged and sacred, unable to compose until he became inspired, and the imagination was no longer under his control. For as long as he was in complete possession of it, he was unable to compose verses or to speak oracularly." And hence all noble numbers were credited by them, not to the poet whom they knew, but to the Power working in and through



him, and making him the most delighted of auditors whenever he chanted his verses, because he did not conceive them to be his. He was the Voice, the favored of the Nine. Hence the value they set upon discipline as the means of poetic divination. The poet, they conceived, must be most virtuous. It was essential to his accomplishment that he be chaste, that he be gentle, that he be noble in his generation, that his endowment be older than himself; that he descend from a race of pure souls,—bring centuries of culture in his descent among men, ideas of ages in his brain,—enabling him to conceive by instinct, and speak his experiences unconsciously, as a child

opens his lips, in his most rapturous accents. Therefore, any pretence of ownership in the gift was esteemed an impiety. For a prayer, a song, a tender tone, a glance of the eye, all those magnetic attractions known to friendship, had a like ancestry; were ours personally, primarily, as we became worthy of being their organs.

Is it an egotism in us to claim for New England and for a contemporary of ours parts and antecedents like these? or shall such endowments, admirable always, and awakening enthusiasm, be the less prized when represented in a countryman of ours, and when we have so frequently partaken of the pleasure which his books, his

lectures especially, excite? I allude, of course, to Emerson. A rhapsodist by genius, and the chief of his class, his utterances are ever a surprise as they are a delight to his audiences; select though these are, and not all unworthy of him.

Hear how Goethe describes him, where in his letters to Schiller, he calls the rhapsodist —

“A wise man, who, in calm thoughtfulness, shows what has happened; his discourse aiming less to excite than to calm his auditors, in order that they shall listen to him with contentment and long. He apportions the interest equally, because it is not in his power to balance a too lively impression. He grasps back-

wards and forwards at pleasure. He is followed, because he has only to do with the imagination, which of itself produces images, and up to a certain degree, it is indifferent what kind he calls up. He does not appear to his auditors, but recites, as it were behind a curtain; so there is a total abstraction from himself, and it seems to them as though they heard only the voice of the Muses."

See our Ion standing there,—his audience, his manuscript, before him,—himself an auditor, as he reads, of the Genius sitting behind him, and to whom he defers, eagerly catching the words,—the words,—as if the accents were first reaching his ears too, and entrancing

alike oracle and auditor. We admire the stately sense, the splendor of diction, and are surprised as we listen. Even his hesitancy between the delivery of his periods, his perilous passages from paragraph to paragraph of manuscript, we have almost learned to like, as if he were but sorting his keys meanwhile for opening his cabinets; the spring of locks following, himself seeming as eager as any of us to get sight of his specimens, as they come forth from their proper drawers; and we wait willingly till his gem is out glittering; admire the setting, too, scarcely less than the jewel itself. The magic minstrel and speaker! whose rhetoric, voiced as by organ-stops, delivers

the sentiment from his breast in cadences peculiar to himself; now hurling it forth on the ear, echoing; then, as his mood and matter invite it, dying like

“Music of mild lutes  
Or silver coated flutes,  
Or the concealing winds that can convey  
Never their tone to the rude ear of day.”

He works his miracles with it, as Hermes did, his voice conducting the sense alike to eye and ear by its lyrical movement and refraining melody. So his compositions affect us, not as logic linked in syllogisms, but as voluntaries rather, or preludes, in which one is not tied to any design of air, but may vary his key or note at pleasure, as if improvised with-

out any particular scope of argument ; each period, each paragraph, being a perfect note in itself, however it may chance chime with its accompaniments in the piece ; as a waltz of wandering stars, a dance of Hesperus with Orion. His rhetoric dazzles by circuits, contrasts, antitheses ; Imagination, as in all sprightly minds, being his wand of power. He comes along his own paths, too, and always in his own fashion. What though he build his piers downwards from the firmament to the tumbling tides, and so throw his radiant span across the fissures of his argument, and himself pass over the frolic arches,—Ariel-wise,—is the skill less admirable, the masonry less secure

for its singularity? So his books are best read as irregular writings, in which the sentiment is, by his enthusiasm, transfused throughout the piece, telling on the mind in cadences of a current under-song, and giving the impression of a connected whole — which it seldom is,— such is the rhapsodist's cunning in its structure and delivery.

The highest compliment we can pay to the scholar is that of having edified and instructed us, we know not how, unless by the pleasure his words have given us. Conceive how much the Lyceum owes to his presence and teachings; how great the debt of many to him for their hour's



entertainment. His, if any one's, let the institution pass into history,—since his art, more than another's, has clothed it with beauty, and made it the place of popular resort, our purest organ of intellectual entertainment for New England and the Western cities. And, besides this, its immediate value to his auditors everywhere, it has been serviceable in ways they least suspect; most of his works, having had their first readings on its platform, were here fashioned and polished in good part, like Plutarch's *Morals*, to become the more acceptable to readers of his published books.

And is not the omen auspicious, that just now, during these winter evenings, at

the opening of this victorious year, *his* Sundays have come round again ; the metropolis, eager, as of old, to hear his words. Does it matter what topic he touches? He adorns all with a severe sententious beauty, a freshness and sanction next to that of godliness, if not that in spirit and effect.

“The princely mind, that can  
Teach man to keep a God in man ;  
And when wise poets would search out to see  
Good men, behold them all in thee.”

'Tis near thirty years since his first book, entitled “Nature,” was printed. Then followed volumes of Essays, Poems, Orations, Addresses · and during all the intervening period down to the present, he has read

briefs of his lectures through a wide range, from Canada to the Capitol; in most of the Free States; in the large cities, East and West, before large audiences; in the smallest towns and to the humblest companies. Such has been his appeal to the mind of his countrymen, such his acceptance by them. He has read lectures in the principal cities of England also. A poet, speaking to individuals as few others can speak, and to persons in their privileged moments, he must be heard as none others are. The more personal he is, the more prevailing, if not the more popular.

Because the poet, accosting the heart of man, speaks to him personally, he is one with all mankind. And if he speak

eloquent words, these words must be cherished by mankind, — belonging as they do to the essence of man's personality, and, partaking of the qualities of his Creator, they are of spiritual significance. While, in so far as he is individual only, — unlike any other man, — his verses address special aptitudes in separate persons ; and he will belong, not to all times, but to one time only, and will pass away, — except to those who delight in that special manifestation of his gifts.

Now were Emerson less individual, according to our distinction, that is, more personal and national, — as American as America, — then were his influence so much the more diffusive, and he the Priest

of the Faith earnest hearts are seeking. Not that religion is wanting here in New England ; but that its seekers are, for the most part, too exclusive to seek it independent of some human leader,—religion being a personal oneness with the Person of Persons ; a partaking of Him by putting off the individualism which distracts and separates man from man. Hence differing sects, persuasions, creeds, bibles, for separate peoples, prevail all over the earth ; religions, being still many, not one and universal, not personal ; similar only as yet in their differences. Still the religious sentiment, in binding all souls to the Personal One, makes the many partake of him in degrees lesser or greater.

Thus far, the poets in largest measure ; mankind receiving through them its purest revelations, they having been its inspired oracles and teachers from the beginning till now. The Sacred Books,— are not these Poems in spirit, if not in form? their authors inspired bards of divinity? Meant for all men in all ages and states, they appeal forever to the springing faiths of every age, and so are permanent and perennial, as the heart itself and its everlasting hopes.

See how the Christian Theism, for instance, has held itself high above most men's heads till now ; its tender truths above all cavil and debate by their transcendent purity and ideal beauty ! how

these truths still survive in all their freshness, keeping verdant the Founder's memory ! and shall to distant generations ; churches, peoples, persons, a widening Christendom, flourishing or fading as they spring forth, or fall away from this living stem.

“ The Son of Man, at last the son of woman,  
 Brother of all men, and the Prince of Peace,  
 Grafts, on the solemn valor of the Roman,  
*Fresh Saxon service*, and the wit of Greece.”

Now, am I saying that our poet is inspiring this fresher Faith ? Certainly I mean to be so understood ; he, the chiefest of its bards and heralds. Not spoken always, 't is implied, nevertheless, in his teachings ; defective, it is admitted, as col-

ored by his temperament, which trenches on Personal Theism not a little by the stress he lays on Nature, on Fate ; yet more nearly complementing the New England Puritanism than aught we have, and coming nearest to satisfying the aspirations of our time.

But it were the last thought of his, this conceiving himself the oracle of any Faith, the leader of any school, any sect of religionists. His genius is ethical, literary ; he speaks to the moral sentiments through the imagination, insinuating the virtues so, as poets and moralists of his class are wont. The Sacred Class, the Priests, differ in this,—they address the moral sentiment directly, thus en-



forcing the sanctions of personal righteousness, and celebrating moral excellence in prophetic strain.

'Tis everything to have a true believer in the world, dealing with men and matters as if they were divine in idea and real in fact ; meeting persons and events at a glance directly, not at a million removes, and so passing fair and fresh into life and literature, the delight and ornament of the race.

Pure literatures are personal inspirations, springing fresh from the Genius of a people. They are original ; their first fruits being verses, essays, tales, biographies — productions as often of obscure as of illustrious persons. And such, so far as

we have a literature, is ours. Of the rest, how much is foreign both in substance and style, and might have been produced elsewhere! His, I consider original and American; the earliest, purest our country has produced,—best answering the needs of the American mind. Consider how largely our letters have been enriched by his contributions. Consider, too, the change his views have wrought in our methods of thinking; how he has won over the bigot, the unbeliever, at least to tolerance and moderation, if not to acknowledgment, by his circumspection and candor of statement.

“His shining armor  
A perfect charmer;

“Even the horns of divinity  
Allow him a brief space,  
And his thought has a place  
Upon the well-bound library’s chaste shelves,  
Where man of various wisdom rarely delves.”

Am I extravagant in believing that our people are more indebted to his teachings than to any other person who has spoken or written on his themes during the last twenty years,—are more indebted than they know, becoming still more so? and that, as his thoughts pass into the brain of the coming generation, it will be seen that we have had at least one mind of home growth, if not independent of the old country? I consider his genius the measure and present expansion of the American mind. And it is plain that he.

is to be read and prized for years to come. Poet and moralist, he has beauty and truth for all men's edification and delight. His works are studies. And any youth of free senses and fresh affections shall be spared years of tedious toil,—in which wisdom and fair learning are, for the most part, held at arm's length, planet's width, from his grasp,—by graduating from this college. His books are surcharged with vigorous thoughts, a sprightly wit. They abound in strong sense, happy humor, keen criticisms, subtle insights, noble morals, clothed in a chaste and manly diction, and fresh with the breath of health and progress.

We characterize and class him with the

moralists who surprise us with an accidental wisdom, strokes of wit, felicities of phrase,—as Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, Saadi, Montaigne, Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, Goethe, Coleridge,—with whose delightful essays, notwithstanding all the pleasure they give us, we still plead our disappointment at not having been admitted to the closer intimacy which these loyal leaves had with their owner's mind before torn from his notebook; jealous, even, at ~~not~~ having been taken into his confidence in the editing itself.

We read, never as if he were the dogmatist, but a fair-speaking mind, frankly declaring his convictions, and committing

these to our consideration, hoping we may have thought like things ourselves; oftenest, indeed, taking this for granted as he wrote. There is nothing of the spirit of proselyting, but the delightful deference ever to our free sense and right of opinion. He might take for his motto the sentiment of Henry More, where, speaking of himself, he says: "Exquisite disquisition begets diffidence; diffidence in knowledge, humility; humility, good manners and meek conversation. For my part, I desire no man to take anything I write or speak upon trust without canvassing, and would be thought rather to propound than to assert what I have here or elsewhere written or spoken. But

continually to have expressed my diffidence in the very tractates and colloquies themselves, had been languid and ridiculous."

Then he has chosen a proper time and manner for saying his good things ; has spoken to almost every great interest as it rose. Nor has he let the good opportunities pass unheeded, or failed to make them for himself. He has taken discretion along as his constant attendant and ally ; has shown how the gentlest temper ever deals the surest blows. His method is that of the sun against his rival for the cloak, and so he is free from any madness of those, who, forgetting the strength of the solar ray, go blustering against men's

prejudices, as if the wearers would run at once against these winds of opposition into their arms for shelter. What higher praise can we bestow on any one than to say of him, that he harbors another's prejudices with a hospitality so cordial as to give him, for the time, the sympathy next best to, if, indeed, it be not edification in, charity itself? For what disturbs and distracts mankind more than the uncivil manners that cleave man from man? Yet for his amendment letters, love, Christianity, were all given!

How different is he in temper and manners from Carlyle, with whom he is popularly associated! but who, for the most part, is the polemic, the sophist, the



scorner: whose books, opened anywhere, show him berating the wrong he sees, but seeing, shows never the means of removing. Ever the same melancholy advocacy of work to be done under the dread master; force of stroke, the right to rule and be ruled, ever the dismal burden. Doomsday books are all save his earliest—Rhadamanthus sitting and the arbiter. He rides his Leviathan as fiercely as did his countryman, Hobbes, and can be as truculent and abusive; the British Taurus, and a mad one. Were he not thus possessed and fearfully in earnest, we should take him for the harlequin he seems, nor see the sorrowing sadness playing off its load in this gro-

tesque mirth, this scornful irony of his; he painting in spite of himself his portraits in the warmth of admiration, the fire of wrath, and giving mythology for history; all the while distorting the facts into grimace in his grim moods. Yet, what breadth of perspective, strength of outline! the realism how appalling, the egotism how enormous,—all history showing in the background of the one figure, Carlyle. Burns, Goethe, Richter, Mirabeau, Luther, Cromwell, Frederick,—all dashed from his flashing pen, heads of himself, alike in their unlikeness, prodigiously individual, willful, some of them monstrous; all Englishmen with their egregious prejudices and pride; no pa-

tience, no repose in any. He still brandishes his truncheon through his pages with an adroitness that renders it unsafe for any, save the few that wield weapons of celestial temper, to do battle against this Abaddon. Silenced he will not be; talking terribly against all talking but his own; agreeing, disagreeing, all the same; he, the Jove, permitting none, none to mount Olympus, till the god deigns silence and invites. Curious to see him, his chin aloft, the pent thunders rolling, lightnings darting from under the bold brows, words that tell of the wail within, accents not meant for music, yet made lyrical in the cadences of his Caledonian refrain; his mirth mad as Lear's, his hu-

mor as willful as the wind's. Not himself is approachable by himself even. And Emerson is the one only American deserving a moment's consideration in his eyes. Him he honors and owns the better, giving him the precedence and the manners :

“Had wolves and lions seen but thee,  
They must have paused to learn civility.”

Of Emerson's books I am not here designing to speak critically, but of his genius and personal influence rather. Yet, in passing, I may say, that his book of “Traits” deserves to be honored as one in which England, Old and New, may take honest pride, as being the live-

liest portraiture of British genius and accomplishments,—a book, like Tacitus, to be quoted as a masterpiece of historical painting, and perpetuating the New Englander's fame with that of his race. 'Tis a victory of eyes over hands, a triumph of ideas. Nor, in my judgment, has there been for some time any criticism of a people so characteristic and complete. It remains for him to do like justice to New England. Not a metaphysician, and rightly discarding any claims to systematic thinking; a poet in spirit, if not always in form; the consistent idealist, yet the realist none the less, he has illustrated the learning and thought of former times on the noblest themes, and

come nearest of any to emancipating the mind of his own time from the errors and dreams of past ages.

Why nibble longer there,  
Where nothing fresh ye find,  
Upon those rocks?

Lo! meadows green and fair;  
Come pasture here your mind,  
Ye bleating flocks.

There is a virtuous curiosity felt by readers of remarkable books to learn something more of their author's literary tastes, habits and dispositions than these ordinarily furnish. Yet, to gratify this is a task as difficult as delicate, requiring a diffidency akin to that with which one

would accost the author himself, and without which graceful armor it were impertinent for a friend even to undertake it. We may venture but a stroke or two here.

All men love the country who love mankind with a wholesome love, and have poetry and company in them. Our essayist makes good this preference. If city bred, he has been for the best part of his life a villager and countryman. Only a traveller at times professionally, he prefers home-keeping; is a student of the landscape; is no recluse misanthrope, but a lover of his neighborhood, of mankind, of rugged strength wherever found; liking plain persons, plain ways, plain clothes;

prefers earnest people, hates egotists, shuns publicity, likes solitude, and knows its uses. He courts society as a spectacle not less than a pleasure, and so carries off the spoils. Delighting in the broadest views of men and things, he seeks all accessible displays of both for draping his thoughts and works. And how is his page produced? Is it imaginable that he conceives his piece as a whole, and then sits down to execute his task at a heat? Is not this imaginable rather, and the key to the comprehension of his works? Living for composition as few authors can, and holding company, studies, sleep, exercise, affairs, subservient to thought, his products are



gathered as they ripen, and stored in his commonplaces ; the contents transcribed at intervals, and classified. The order of ideas, of imagination, is observed in the arrangement, not that of logical sequence. You may begin at the last paragraph and read backwards. 'Tis Iris-built. Each period is self-poised ; there may be a chasm of years between the opening passage and the last written, and there is endless time in the composition. Jewels all ! separate stars. You may have them in a galaxy, if you like, or view them separate and apart. But every one knows that, if he take an essay or verses, however the writer may have pleased himself with the cunning work-

manship, 'tis all cloud-fashioned, and there is no pathway for any one else. Cross as you can, or not cross, it matters not ; you may climb or leap, move in circles, turn somersaults ;

“ In sympathetic sorrow sweep the ground,”

like his swallow in Merlin. Dissolving views, projects, vistas open wide and far,—yet earth, sky, realities all, not illusions. Here is substance, sod, sun ; much fair weather in the seer as in his leaves. The whole quarternion of the seasons, the sidereal year, has been poured into these periods. Afternoon walks furnished the perspectives, rounded and melodized them. These good things have all been

talked and slept over, meditated standing and sitting, read and polished in the utterance, submitted to all various tests, and, so accepted, they pass into print. Light fancies, dreams, moods, refrains, were set on foot, and sent jaunting about the fields, along wood-paths, by Walden shores, by hill and brook-sides,—to come home and claim their rank and honors too in his pages. Composed of surrounding matters, populous with thoughts, brisk with images, these books are wholesome, homelike, and could have been written only in New England, in Concord, and by our poet.

“Because I was content with these poor fields,  
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish streams,

And found a home in haunts which others  
scorned,

The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,  
And granted me the freedom of their state ;  
And in their secret senate have prevailed  
With the dear, dangerous lords that rule our life,  
Made moon and planets parties to their bond,  
And through my rock-like, solitary wont  
Shot million rays of thought and tenderness.  
For me, in showers, in sweeping showers, the  
spring,

Visits the valley ; — break away the clouds,—  
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,  
And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.  
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,  
Blue-coated, flying before from tree to tree,  
Courageous, sing a delicate overture  
To lead the tardy concert of the year.  
Onward and nearer rides the sun of May ;  
And wide around, the marriage of the plants  
Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain  
The surge of summer's beauty ; dell and crag,

Hollow and lake, hillside, and pine arcade,  
 Are touched with Genius. Yonder ragged cliff  
 Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.

. . . . . The gentle deities  
 Showed me the lore of colors and of sounds,  
 The innumerable tenements of beauty,  
 The miracle of generative force,  
 Far-reaching concords of astronomy  
 Felt in the plants and in the punctual birds ;  
 Better, the linked purpose of the whole,  
 And, chiefest prize, found I true liberty  
 In the glad home plain-dealing nature gave.  
 The polite found me impolite ; the great  
 Would mortify me, but in vain ; for still  
 I am a willow of the wilderness,  
 Loving the wind that bent me. All my hurts  
 My garden spade can heal. A woodland walk,  
 A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,  
 A wild-rose, or rock-loving columbine,  
 Salve my worst wounds.

For thus the wood-gods murmured in my ear :  
 ‘Dost love our manners? Canst thou silent lie?  
 Canst thou, thy pride forgot, like nature pass  
 Into the winter night’s extinguished mood?  
 Canst thou shine now, then darkle,  
 And being latent feel thyself no less?  
 As, when the all-worshipped moon attracts the eye,  
 The river, hill, stems, foliage, are obscure ;  
 Yet envies none, none are unenviable.’ ”

I know of but one subtraction from  
 the pleasure the reading of his books—  
 shall I say his conversation?—gives me,  
 his pains to be impersonal or discrete, as  
 if he feared any the least intrusion of him-  
 self were an offence offered to self-respect  
 the courtesy due to intercourse and au-  
 thorship; thus depriving his page, his  
 company, of attractions the great masters

of both knew how to insinuate into their text and talk, without overstepping the bounds of social or literary decorum. What is more delightful than personal magnetism? 'Tis the charm of good fellowship as of good writing. To get and to give the largest measures of satisfaction, to fill ourselves with the nectâr of select experiences, not without some intertinctures of egotism so charming in a companion, is what we seek in books of the class of his, as in their authors. We associate diffidence properly with learning, frankness with fellowship, and owe a certain blushing reverence to both. For though our companion be a bashful man, —and he is the worse if wanting this

grace,— we yet wish him to be an enthusiast behind all reserves, and capable of abandonment sometimes in his books. I know how rare this genial humor is, this frankness of the blood, and how surpassing is the gift of good spirits, especially here in cold New England, where, for the most part,

“Our virtues grow  
Beneath our humors, and at seasons show.”

And yet, under our east winds of reserve, there hides an obscure courtesy in the best natures, which neither temperament nor breeding can spoil. Sometimes manners the most distant are friendly foils for holding eager dispositions subject to



the measure of right behavior. 'T is not every New Englander that dares venture upon the frankness, the plain speaking, commended by the Greek poet.

“Caress me not with words, while far away  
 Thy heart is absent, and thy feelings stray ;  
 But if thou love me with a faithful breast,  
 Be that pure love with zeal sincere exprest ;  
 And if thou hate, the bold aversion show  
 With open face avowed, and known my foe.”

Fortunate the visitor who is admitted of a morning for the high discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his afternoon walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere,—hours likely to be remembered, as unlike any others in his calendar of experiences. I may say, for me they have

made ideas possible, by hospitalities given to a fellowship so enjoyable. Shall I describe them as sallies oftenest into the cloud-lands, into scenes and intimacies ever new? none the less novel nor remote than when first experienced; colloquies, in favored moments, on themes, perchance

“Of fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;”

nor yet

“In wand’ring mazes lost,”

as in Milton’s page;

But pathways plain through starry alcoves high,  
Or thence descending to the level plains.

Interviews, however, bringing their trail of perplexing thoughts, costing

some days' duties, several nights' sleep oftentimes, to restore one to his place and poise for customary employment; half a dozen annually being full as many as the stoutest heads may well undertake without detriment.

Certainly safer not to venture without the sure credentials, unless one will have his pretensions pricked, his conceits reduced in their vague dimensions.

"Fools have no means to meet  
But by their feet."

But to the modest, the ingenuous, the gifted, welcome! Nor can any bearing be more poetic and polite than his to all such, to youth and accomplished women

especially. I may not intrude farther than to say, that, beyond any I have known, his is a faith approaching to superstition concerning admirable persons; the divinity of friendship come down from childhood, and surviving yet in memory if not in expectation; the rumor of excellence of any sort, being like the arrival of a new gift to mankind, and he the first to proffer his recognition and hope. His affection for conversation, for clubs, is a lively intimation of the religion of fellowship. He, shall we say? if any, must have taken the census of the admirable people of his time, numbering as many among his friends, perhaps, as most living Americans; while he is already recognized as

the representative mind of his country, to whom distinguished foreigners are especially commended on visiting us.

Extraordinary persons may be forgiven some querulousness about their company, when we remember that ordinary people often complain of theirs. Impossible for such to comprehend the scholar's code of civilities,—disposed as men are to hold all persons to their special standard. Yet dedicated to high labors, so much the more strict is the scholar with himself, as his hindrances are the less appreciable, and he has, besides, his own moods to humor.

“Askest how long thou shalt stay,  
Devastator of the day?”

“Heartily know,  
When half-gods go,  
The Gods arrive.”

Companionableness comes by nature. We meet magically, and pass with sounding manners; else we encounter repulses, strokes of fate; temperament telling against temperament, precipitating us into vortices from which the nimblest finds no escape. We pity the person who shows himself unequal to such occasions; the scholar, for example, whose intellect is so exacting, so precise, that he cannot meet his company otherwise than critically; cannot descend through the senses or the sentiments to that common level where intercourse is possible with men;

but we pity him the more, who, from caprice or confusion, can meet through these only. Still worse the case of him who can meet men neither as sentimentalist nor idealist, or, rather not at all in a human way. Intellect interblends with sentiment in the companionable mind, and wit with humor. We detain the flowing tide at the cost of lapsing out of perception into memory, into the limbo of fools. Excellent people wonder why they cannot meet and converse. They cannot,—no—their wits have ebbed away, and left them helpless. Why, but because of hostile temperaments, different states of animation? The personal magnetism finds no conductor, when one

is individual, and the other individual no less. Individuals repel; persons meet; and only as one's personality is sufficiently overpowering to dissolve the other's individualism, can the parties flow together and become one. But individuals have no power of this sort. They are two, not one, perhaps many. Prisoned within themselves by reason of their egotism, like animals, they stand aloof; are separate even when they touch; are solitary in any company, having no company in themselves. But the free personal mind meets all, is apprehended by all; by the least cultivated, the most gifted; magnetizes all; is the spell-binder, the liberator of every one.



We speak of sympathies, antipathies, fascinations, fates, for this reason.

Here we have the key to literary composition, to eloquence, to fellowship. Let us apply it, for the moment, to Emerson's genius. We forbear entering into the precincts of genesis, and complexions, wherein sleep the secrets of character and manners. Eloquent in trope and utterance when his vaulting intelligence frees itself for the instant, yet see his loaded eye, his volleyed period ; jets of wit, sallies of sense, breaks, inconsequences, all betraying the pent personality from which his rare accomplishments have not yet liberated his gifts, nor given him unreservedly to the Muse and mankind.

Take his own account of the matter.

“When I was born,  
 From all the seas of strength Fate filled a chalice,  
 Saying : ‘ This be thy portion, child : this chalice,  
 Less than a lily’s, thou shalt daily draw  
 From my great art eries,— not less nor more.’  
 All substances the cunning chemist, Time,  
 Melts down into the liquor of my life,—  
 Friends, foes, joys, fortunes, beauty and disgust ;  
 And whether I am angry or content,  
 Indebted or insulted, loved or hurt,  
 All he distils into sidereal wine,  
 And brims my little cup, heedless, alas !  
 Of all he sheds, how little it will hold,  
 How much runs over on the desert sands.  
 If a new Muse draw me with splendid ray,  
 And I uplift myself into its heaven,  
 The needs of the first sight absorb my blood ;  
 And all the following hours of the day  
 Drag a ridiculous age.  
 To-day, when friends approach, and every hour

Brings book, or star-bright scroll of Genius,  
 The little cup will hold not a bead more,  
 And all the costly liquor runs to waste ;  
 Nor gives the jealous lord one diamond drop  
 So to be husbanded for poorer days.  
 Why need I volumes, if one word suffice ?  
 Why need I galleries, when a pupil's draught,  
 After the master's sketch, fills and o'erfills  
 My apprehension ? Why seek Italy,  
 Who cannot circumnavigate the sea  
 Of thoughts and things at home, but still adjourn  
 The nearest matter for a thousand days ? ”

Plutarch tells us that of old they were wont to call men  $\Phi\omega\tau\alpha$ , which imports light, not only for the vehement desire man has to know, but to communicate also. And the Platonists fancied that the gods, being above men, had something whereof man did not partake, pure

intellect and knowledge, and thus kept on their way quietly. The beasts, being below men, had something whereof man had less, sense and growth, so they lived quietly in their way. While man had something in him whereof neither gods nor beasts had any trace, which gave him all the trouble, and made all the confusion in the world,—and that was egotism and opinion.

A finer discrimination of gifts might show that Genius ranges through this threefold dominion, partaking in turn of each essence and degree.

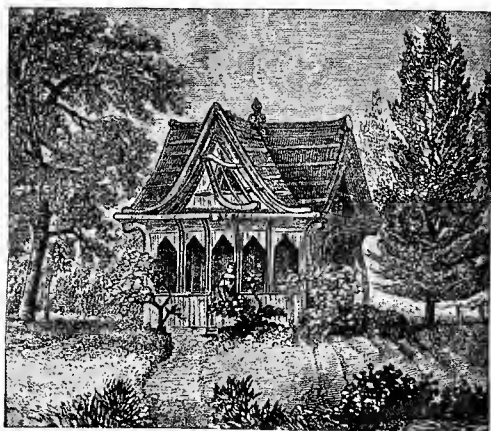
Was our poet planted so fast in intellect, so firmly rooted in the mind, so dazzled with light, yet so cleft withal by

duplicity of gifts, that, thus forced to traverse the mid-world of contrast and contrariety, he was ever glancing forth from his coverts at life as reflected through his dividing prism, — resident never long in the tracts he surveyed, yet their persistent Muse nevertheless? And so, housed in the Mind, and thence sallying forth in quest of his game, whether of persons or things, he was the Mercury, the merchantman of ideas to his century. Nor was he left alone in life and thinking. Beside him stood his townsman,\* whose sylvan intelligence, fast rooted in sense and Nature, was yet armed with a sagacity, a subtlety and strength, that pene-

\* Thoreau.

trated while divining the essences of the creatures and things he studied, and of which he seemed both Atlas and Head.

Forcible protestants against the materialism of their own, as of preceding times, these masterly Idealists substantiated beyond all question their right to the empires they swayed,—the rich estates of an original genius.



EMERSON'S SUMMER HOUSE.













THE SUMMER SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, CONCORD, MASS.

# ION: A MONODY.

By A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

READ BEFORE THE CONCORD SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, JULY 22, 1882.

---

## I.

Why, oh, ye willows, and ye pastures bare,  
Why will ye thus your bloom so late delay,  
Wrap in chill weeds the sere and sullen day,  
And cheerless greet me wandering in despair?  
Tell me, ah, tell me!—ye of old could tell,—  
Whither my vanished Ion now doth fare.  
Say, have ye seen him lately pass this way,  
Ye who his wonted haunts did know full well?  
Heard ye his voice forth from the thicket swell,  
Where midst the drooping ferns he loved to stray?  
Caught ye no glimpses of my truant there?  
Tell me, oh, tell me, whither he hath flown —  
Beloved Ion flown, and left ye sad and lone,  
Whilst I through wood and field his loss bemoan.

## II.

Early through field and wood each Spring we sped,  
 Young Ion leading o'er the reedy pass ;  
 How fleet his footsteps and how sure his tread !  
 His converse deep and weighty ; — where, alas !  
 Like force of thought with subtlest beauty wed ?  
 The bee and bird and flower, the pile of grass,  
 The lore of stars, the azure sky o'erhead,  
 The eye's warm glance, the Fates of love and dread,—  
 All mirrored were in his prismatic glass ;  
 For endless Being's myriad-minded race  
 Had in his thought their registry and place,—  
 Bright with intelligence, or drugged with sleep,  
 Hid in dark cave, aloft on mountain steep,  
 In seas immersed, ensouled in starry keep.

## III.

Now Echo answers lone from cliff and brake,  
 Where we in springtime sauntering loved to go,—  
 Or at the mossy bank beyond the lake,  
 On its green plushes oft ourselves did throw :  
 There from the sparkling wave our thirst to slake,

Dipped in the spring that bubbled up below,  
 Our hands for cups, and did with glee partake.  
 Next to the Hermit's cell our way we make,  
 Where sprightly talk doth hold the morning late ;  
 Deserted now : ah, Hylas, too, is gone !  
 Hylas, dear Ion's friend and mine,—I all alone,  
 Alone am left by unrelenting fate,—  
 Vanished my loved ones all,—the good, the great,—  
 Why am I spared ? why left disconsolate ?

## IV.

Slow winds our Indian stream through meadows green,  
 By bending willows, tangled fen and brake,  
 Smooth field and farmstead doth its flow forsake ;  
 'Twas in far woodpaths Ion, too, was seen,  
 But oftenest found at Walden's emerald lake,  
 (The murmuring pines inverted in its sheen ;)  
 There in his skiff he rippling rhymes did make,  
 Its answering shores echoing the verse between :  
 Full-voiced the meaning of the wizard song,  
 Far wood and wave and shore, with kindred will,  
 Strophe, antistrophe, in turn prolong : —

Now wave and shore and wood are mute and chill,  
 Ion, melodious bard, hath dropt his quill,  
 His harp is silent, and his voice is still.

## V.

Blameless was Ion, beautiful to see,  
 With native genius, with rich gifts endowed ;  
 He might of his descent be nobly proud,  
 Yet meekly tempered was, spake modestly,  
 Nor sought the plaudits of the noisy crowd,  
 When Duty called him in the thick to be.  
 His life flowed calmly clear, not hoarse nor loud ;  
 He wearied not of immortality,  
 Nor like Tithonus begged a time-spun shroud ;  
 But life-long drank at fountains of pure truth,  
 The seer unsated of eternal youth.  
 'Tis not for Ion's sake these tears I shed,  
 'Tis for the Age he nursed, his genius fed,—  
 Ion immortal is,—he is not dead.

## VI.

Did e'en the Ionian bard, Mæonides,  
 Blind minstrel wandering out of Asia's night,



The Iliad of Troy's loves and rivalries,  
 In strains forever tuneful to recite,  
 His raptured listeners the more delight?  
 Or dropt learned Plato 'neath his olive trees,  
 More star-bright wisdom in the world's full sight,  
 Well garnered in familiar colloquies,  
 Than did our harvester in fields of light?  
 Nor spoke more charmingly young Charmides,  
 Than our glad rhapsodist in his far flight  
 Across the continents, both new and old ;  
 His tale to studious thousands thus he told  
 In summer's solstice and midwinter's cold.

## VII.

Shall from the shades another Orpheus rise  
 Sweeping with venturous hand the vocal string,  
 Kindle glad raptures, visions of surprise,  
 And wake to ecstasy each slumberous thing ;  
 Flash life and thought anew in wondering eyes,  
 As when our seer transcendent, sweet, and wise,  
 World-wide his native melodies did sing,  
 Flushed with fair hopes and ancient memories?

Ah, no ! his matchless lyre must silent lie,  
 None hath the vanished minstrel's wondrous skill  
 To touch that instrument with art and will ;  
 With him winged Poesy doth droop and die,  
 While our dull age, left voiceless, with sad eye  
 Follows his flight to groves of song on high.

## VIII.

Come, then, Mnemosyne ! and on me wait,  
 As if for Ion's harp thou gav'st thine own ;  
 Recall the memories of man's ancient state,  
 Ere to this low orb had his form dropt down,  
 Clothed in the ceremonies of his chosen fate ;  
 Oblivious here of heavenly glories flown,  
 Lapsed from the high, the fair, the blest estate,  
 Unknowing these, and by himself unknown :  
 Lo ! Ion, unfallen from his lordly prime,  
 Paused in his passing flight, and, giving ear  
 To heedless sojourners in weary time,  
 Sang his full song of hope and lofty cheer ;  
 Aroused them from dull sleep, from grisly fear,  
 And toward the stars their faces did uprear.

## IX.

Why didst thou haste away, ere yet the green  
Enameled meadow, the sequestered dell,  
The blossoming orchard, leafy grove were seen  
In the sweet season thou hadst sung so well?  
Why cast this shadow o'er the vernal scene?  
No more its rustic charms of thee may tell  
And so content us with their simple mien.  
Was it that memory's unrelinquished spell  
(Ere man had stumbled here amid the tombs,) revived for thee that Spring's perennial blooms,  
Those cloud-capped alcoves where we once did dwell  
Translated wast thou in some rapturous dream?  
Our once familiar faces strange must seem,  
Whilst from thine own celestial smiles did stream!

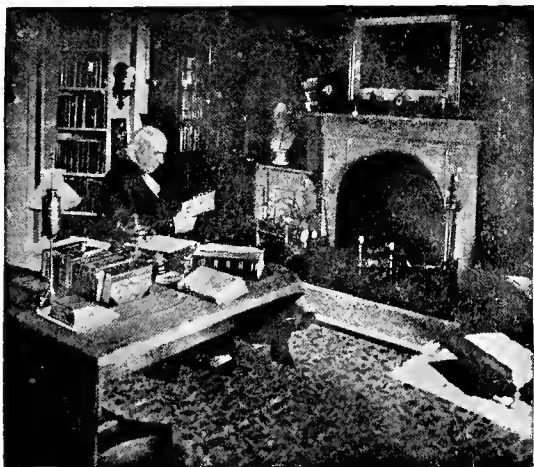
## X.

I tread the marble leading to his door,  
(Allowed the freedom of a chosen friend;)—  
He greets me not as was his wont before,  
The Fates within frown on me as of yore,—  
Could ye not once your offices suspend?

Had Atropos her severing shears forbore !  
 Or Clotho stooped the Sundered thread to mend !  
 Yet why dear Ion's destiny deplore ?  
 What more had envious Time himself to give ?  
 His fame had reached the ocean's farthest shore,—  
 Why prisoned here should Ion longer live ?  
 The questioning Sphinx declared him void of blame ;  
 For wiser answer none could ever frame ;  
 Beyond all time survives his mighty name.

# XI.

Now pillowed near loved Hylas' lowly bed,  
 Beneath our aged oaks and sighing pines,  
 Pale Ion rests awhile his laureled head ;  
 (How sweet his slumber as he there reclines !)  
 Why weep for Ion here ? He is not dead,  
 Nought of him Personal that mound confines ;  
 The hues ethereal of the morning red  
 This clod embraces never, nor enshrines.  
 Away the mourning multitude hath sped,  
 And round us closes fast the gathering night,  
 As from the drowsy dell the sun declines,



MR. ALCOTT'S STUDY.



Ion hath vanished from our clouded sight,—  
But on the morrow, with the budding May,  
A-field goes Ion, at first flush of day,  
Across the pastures on his dewy way.





## THE POET'S COUNTERSIGN.



## THE POET'S COUNTERSIGN.

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AN ODE READ BY F. B. SANBORN, AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCORD  
SCHOOL, JULY 17, 1882.

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“ I grant, sweet soul, thy lovely argument  
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen ;  
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent,  
He robs thee of, and pays it thee again ;  
He lends thee virtue,— and he stole that word  
From thy behavior ; beauty doth he give,  
And found it on thy cheek ; he can afford  
No praise to thee but what in thee doth live.”

### I.

Across these meadows, o'er the hills,  
Beside our sleeping waters, hurrying rills,  
Through many a woodland dark, and many a bright  
arcade,

Where out and in the shifting sunbeams braid  
 An Indian mat of checquered light and shade,—  
 The sister seasons in their maze,  
 Since last we wakened here  
 From hot siesta the still drowsy year,  
 Have led the fourfold dance along our quiet ways,—  
 Autumn apparelled sadly gay,  
 Winter's white furs and shortened day,  
 Spring's loitering footstep, quickened at the last,  
 And half the affluent summer went and came,  
 As for uncounted years the same —  
 Ah me ! another unreturning spring hath passed.

## II.

“ When the young die,” the Grecian mourner said,  
 “ The springtime from the year hath vanished ; ”  
 The gray-haired poet, in unfailing youth,  
 Sits by the shrine of Truth,  
 Her oracles to spell,  
 And their deep meaning tell ;  
 Or else he chants a bird-like note

From that thick-bearded throat  
 Which warbled forth the songs of smooth-cheeked May  
 Beside Youth's sunny fountain all the day ;  
     Sweetly the echoes ring  
     As in the flush of spring ;  
 At last the poet dies,  
 The sunny fountain dries, —  
 The oracles are dumb, no more the wood-birds sing.

## III.

Homer forsakes the billowy round  
 Of sailors circling o'er the island-sea ;  
 Pindar, from Theban fountains and the mound  
 Builded in love and woe by doomed Antigone,  
 Must pass beneath the ground ;  
 Stout Æschylus that slew the deep-haired Mede  
 At Marathon, at Salamis, and freed  
 Athens from Persian thrall,  
 Then sung the battle call,—  
 Must yield to that one foe he could not quell ;

In Gela's flowery plain he slumbers well.\*  
 Sicilian roses bloom  
 Above his nameless tomb ;  
 And there the nightingale doth mourn in vain  
 For Bion, too, who sung the Dorian strain ;  
 By Arethusa's tide,  
 His brother swains might flute in Dorian mood, —  
 The bird of love in thickets of the wood  
 Sing for a thousand years his grave beside —  
 Yet Bion still was mute — the Dorian lay had died.

## IV.

The Attic poet at approach of age  
 Laid by his garland, took the staff and scrip,  
 For singing robes the mantle of the sage,—  
 And taught gray wisdom with the same grave lip  
 That once had carolled gay  
 Where silver flutes breathed soft and festal harps did  
 play ;

\* Athenian Æschylus Euphorion's son,  
 Buried in Gela's field these *words* declare:  
 His *deeds* are registered at Marathon,  
 Known to the deep-haired Mede who meet him there.  
 — *Greek Anthology*.

Young Plato sang of love and beauty's charm,  
 While he that from Stagira came to hear  
 In lyric measures bade his princely pupil arm,  
 And strike the Persian tyrant mute with fear.  
 High thought doth well accord with melody,  
 Brave deed with Poesy,  
 And song is prelude fair to sweet Philosophy.  
 But wiser English Shakspeare's noble choice,  
 Poet and sage at once, whose varied voice  
 Taught beyond Plato's ken, yet charming every ear ;—  
 A kindred choice was his, whose spirit hovers here.

## V.

Now Avon glides through Severn to the sea,  
 And murmurs that her Shakspeare sings no more ;  
 Thames bears the freight of many a tribute shore,  
 But on those banks her poet bold and free,  
 That stooped in blindness at his humble door,  
 Yet never bowed to priest or prince the knee,  
 Wanders no more by those sad sisters led ;

Herbert and Spenser dead  
 Have left their names alone to him whose scheme  
 Stiffly endeavors to supplant the dream  
 Of seer and poet, with mechanic rule  
 Learned from the chemist's closet, from the surgeon's  
     tool.

With us Philosophy still spreads her wing,  
 And soars to seek Heaven's King —  
 Nor creeps through charnels, prying with the glass  
 That makes the little big,—while gods unseen may pass.

## VI.

Along the marge of these slow-gliding streams,  
 Our winding Concord and the wider flow  
 Of Charles by Cambridge, walks and dreams  
 A throng of poets,—tearfully they go ;  
 For each bright river misses from its band  
 The keenest eye, the truest heart, the surest minstrel  
     hand,—  
 They sleep each on his wooded hill above the sorrow-  
     ing land.



Duly each mound with garlands we adorn  
 Of violet, lily, laurel, and the flowering thorn,—  
 Sadly above them wave  
 The wailing pine-trees of their native strand ;  
 Sadly the distant billows smite the shore,  
 Plash in the sunlight, or at midnight roar ;  
 All sounds of melody, all things sweet and fair,  
 On earth, in sea or air,  
 Droop and grow silent by the poet's grave.

## VII.

Yet wherefore weep? Old age is but a tomb,  
 A living hearse, slow creeping to the gloom  
 And utter silence. He from age is freed  
 Who meets the stroke of Death and rises thence  
 Victor o'er every woe ; his sure defence  
 Is swift defeat ; by that he doth succeed.  
 Death is the poet's friend — I speak it sooth ;  
 Death shall restore him to his golden youth,  
 Unlock for him the portal of renown,  
 And on Fame's tablet write his verses down,

For every age in endless time to read.  
 With us Death's quarrel is : he takes away  
 Joy from our eyes — from this dark world the day —  
 When other skies he opens to the poet's ray.

## VIII.

Lonely these meadows green,  
 Silent these warbling woodlands must appear  
 To us, by whom our poet-sage was seen  
 Wandering among their beauties, year by year,—  
 Listening with delicate ear  
 To each fine note that fell from tree or sky,  
 Or rose from earth on high :  
 Glancing that falcon eye,  
 In kindly radiance as of some young star,  
 At all the shows of Nature near and far,  
 Or on the tame procession plodding by,  
 Of daily toil and care,— and all life's pageantry ;  
 Then darting forth warm beams of wit and love,  
 Wide as the sun's great orbit, and as high above  
 These paths wherein our lowly tasks we ply.

## IX.

His was the task and his the lordly gift  
 Our eyes, our hearts, bent earthward, to uplift ;  
 He found us chained in Plato's fabled cave,  
 Our faces long averted from the blaze  
 Of Heaven's broad light, and idly turned to gaze  
 On shadows, flitting ceaseless as the wave  
 That dashes ever idly on some isle enchanted ;  
 By shadows haunted  
 We sat,—amused in youth, in manhood daunted,  
 In vacant age forlorn,—then slipped within the grave,  
 The same dull chain still clasped around our shroud ;  
 These captives, bound and bowed,  
 He from their dungeon like that angel led  
 Who softly to imprisoned Peter said,  
 “ Arise up quickly ! gird thyself and flee ! ”  
 We wist not whose the thrilling voice, we knew our  
 souls were free.

## X.

Ah ! blest those years of youthful hope,  
 When every breeze was Zephyr, every morning May' !

Then as we bravely climbed the slope  
 Of life's steep mount, we gained a wider scope  
 At every stair, and could with joy survey  
 The track beneath us, and the upward way ;  
 Both lay in light — round both the breath of love  
 Fragrant and warm from Heaven's own tropic blew ;  
 Beside us what glad comrades smiled and strove !  
 Beyond us what dim visions rose to view !  
 With thee, dear Master ! through that morning land  
 We journeyed happy : thine the guiding hand,  
 Thine the far-looking eye, the dauntless smile ;  
 Thy lofty song of hope did the long march beguile.

# XI.

Now scattered wide and lost to loving sight  
 The gallant train  
 That heard thy strain ;  
 'T is May no longer, — shadows of the night  
 Beset the downward pathway ; thou art gone,  
 And with thee vanished that perpetual dawn  
 Of which thou wert the harbinger and seer.



BRIDGE AT CONCORD.



Yet courage ! comrades,— though no more we hear  
Each other's voices, lost within this cloud  
That time and chance about our way have cast,  
Still his brave music haunts the hearkening ear,  
As 'mid bold cliffs and dewy passes of the Past.  
Be that our countersign ! for chanting loud  
His magic song, though far apart we go,  
Best shall we thus discern both friend and foe.





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